

Creating capacity for learning through professional learning communities

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Outline

➤ The learning imperative
and capacity for learning

➤ Creating capacity
through professional
learning communities –
questions to ask

7 Survival Skills

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration across networks leading by influence
- Agility and adaptability
- Initiative and entrepreneurship
- Effective oral and written communication
- Accessing and analysing information
- Curiosity and imagination

Wagner (2008)

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.



**World Health
Organization**

**Powerful
learning
dispositions**

**Resilience –
emotional
strength**

**Resourcefulness –
cognitive
capability**

**Reflection –
strategic
awareness**

**Relating –
social
sophistication**

...the kind of education
needed today requires
teachers to be high-
level knowledge
workers who constantly
advance their own
professional knowledge
as well as that of their
profession.

Istance and Vincent-Lancrin
with Van Damme, Schleicher
and Weatherby (OECD, 2012)

Capacity

. . . allows [people] routinely to learn from the world around them and apply their learning to new . . . situations so that they continue on a path toward their goals, even though the context is ever-changing.

Stoll and Earl (2003)

How the World's Most Improved Systems Keep Getting Better



Improving through
peers and innovation

McKinsey & Company (2010)

Make creating capacity a habit of mind: develop professional learning communities

Ubuntu

Collaborative
culture

Collective
responsibility

Inclusive

Trust and respect

Distributed leadership

Joint practice
development

Collaborative
enquiry

‘Deprivatised’
practice

Focused on making a difference
to pupils’ learning

Questions to ask about developing professional learning communities

1. Are you helping to develop pupils' learning capacity?

7 research-informed principles of learning to guide development of learning environments for the 21st century

1. Learners at the centre
2. The social nature of learning
3. Emotions are integral to learning
4. Recognising individual differences
5. Stretching all students
6. Assessment for learning
7. Building horizontal connections

Based on Dumont, Istance and Benavides (2010)

2. Is there a culture of collaborative enquiry and learning?

Spirals of Inquiry: For equity and quality

FOCUSING

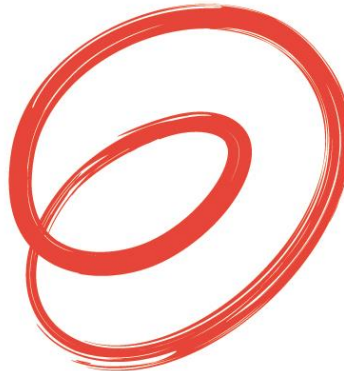
What does our focus need to be?

SCANNING

What's going on for our learners?

CHECKING

Have we made enough of a difference?



DEVELOPING A HUNCH

What is leading to this situation?

LEARNING

How and where can we learn more about what to do?

TAKING ACTION

What will we do differently?

Halbert and Kaser (2013)

Specific features of collaborative professional learning linked to benefits for staff practice and pupils' learning

Observation

Peer support

Specialist support

Ownership

Building on existing knowledge

Processes for sustaining the learning over time

The Research Lesson process: step by step

1. Analyse your data and identify your focus
2. Identify your lesson study group and set ground rules
3. Connect with, and draw on what is already known about your focus before you start
4. Identify 3 case pupils
5. Jointly plan a research lesson based on the case pupils' needs
6. Joint observation and data capture
7. Joint analysis and recording – be explicit about what you have learned
8. Finding ways of helping others learn from what you have learned

NCSL (2005) based on
Japanese Lesson
Study

Effective professional development challenges thinking as a fundamental part of changing practice

The result of professional learning isn't only visible in changes in practice but also "in one's thinking about the how and why of that practice . Kelchtermans (2004)

Digging deep and understanding why one practice is better than another

Challenging and interrupting assumptions
Timperley (2011)

Intentional interruption Katz and Dack (2012)

From Stoll et al
(2012)

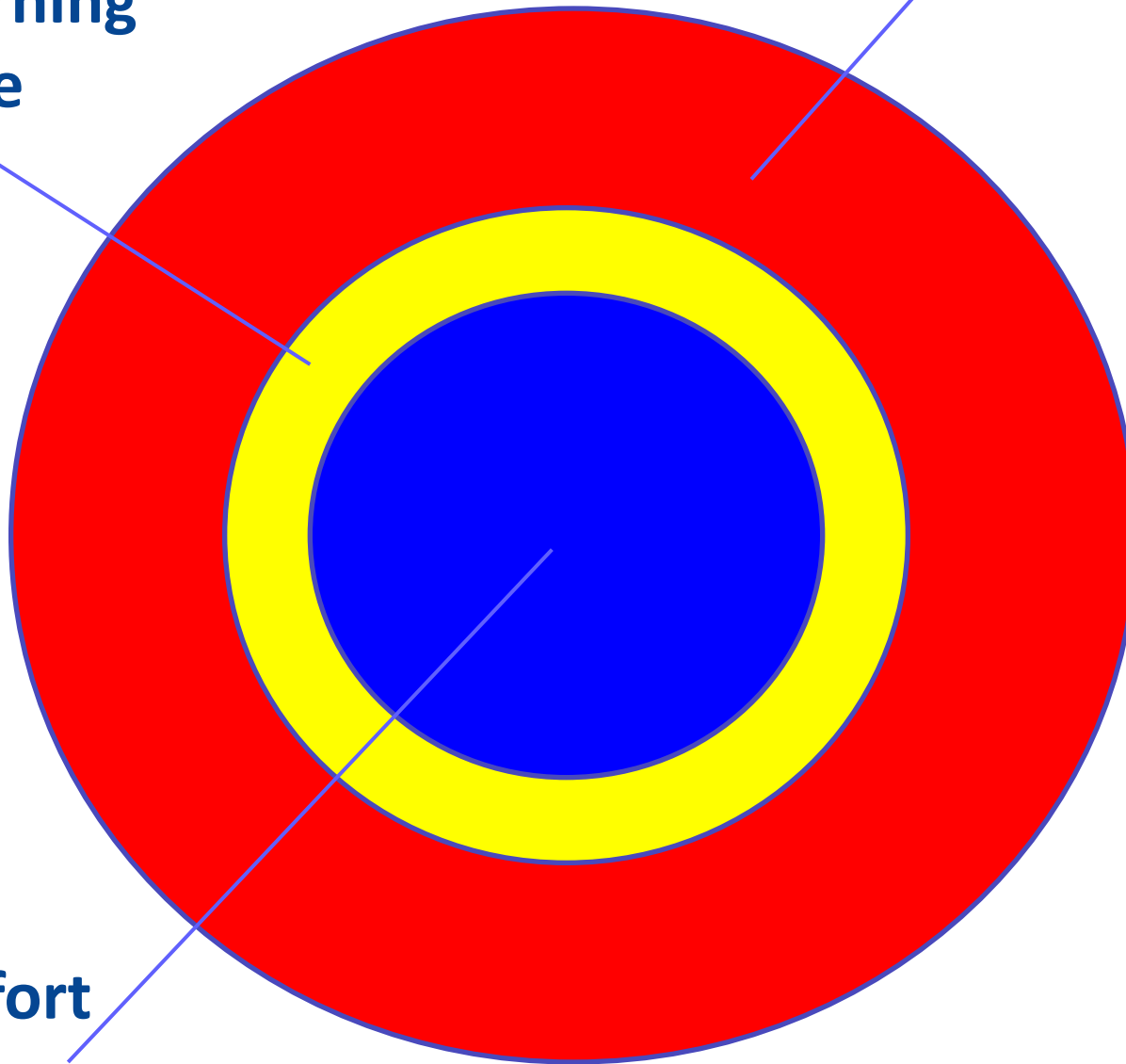
**Learning
zone**

Panic zone



When did
you last learn
something
that took you
out of your
comfort
zone?

**Comfort
zone**



Senninger
(2000)

I felt myself getting more confident
each week

It's done my confidence a world of
good. I feel so much better. It should
almost be compulsory for building
self-esteem

I didn't expect to feel different inside
as a result of doing it. If I can do that, .
. . there would be very little that I
shouldn't now be able to handle

Now I've done something difficult,
maybe I could do other things

**Increased
confidence as a
result of learning
stand up comedy**

Stoll (2013)

3. Do you talk about learning and teaching?

Learning conversations

... how educators make meaning together and jointly come up with new insights and knowledge. These conversations lead to intentional change to enhance practice and student learning.

Stoll (2012)

Ealing Professional Learning Community reviewer feedback form

Area and focus of enquiry:

What do you see, hear, think is going on for students?

So what conditions for learning or adult behaviours facilitate what is going on?

Summary comment for end of day feedback – what key strengths could the school build on to further develop learning?

Depth of talk in social networks of maths teachers

Talk related to one or more of:

Low	How to coordinate text, standards, assessment, pacing guides; how to organise the classroom; sharing materials or activities; general discussion of how a lesson went or whether students were 'getting it'
Medium	How lesson went, including why; detailed planning, including discussing why; specific = detailed discussion of whether students were learning (but not how they learn); discussing teaching strategies in the context of observations; doing maths problems with discussion
High	Talk related to one or more of the following pedagogical principles underlying teaching and learning approaches; how students learn, or the nature of students' mathematical thinking; mathematical principles or concepts

4. Do you practise to develop expertise?



5. Do you develop leadership capacity?

Leadership development cultures

- Everyone is a leader
- Everyone can be a leader
- Anyone could be a leader

Matthews, Higham, Stoll, Brennan and Riley (2011)

6. Can you see examples of professional learning community as you move through the school?



What do you see as you move around your school? What messages would a visitor receive? Would they know that your school is a professional learning community?

7. Are you a creative learning community?

Creative leadership

... collaborative,
imaginative and thought
through responses to
opportunities and to
challenging issues that
inhibit learning at all levels.

.. seeing, thinking and
doing things differently in
order to improve the life
chances of all students.

**Stoll and Temperley
(2010)**

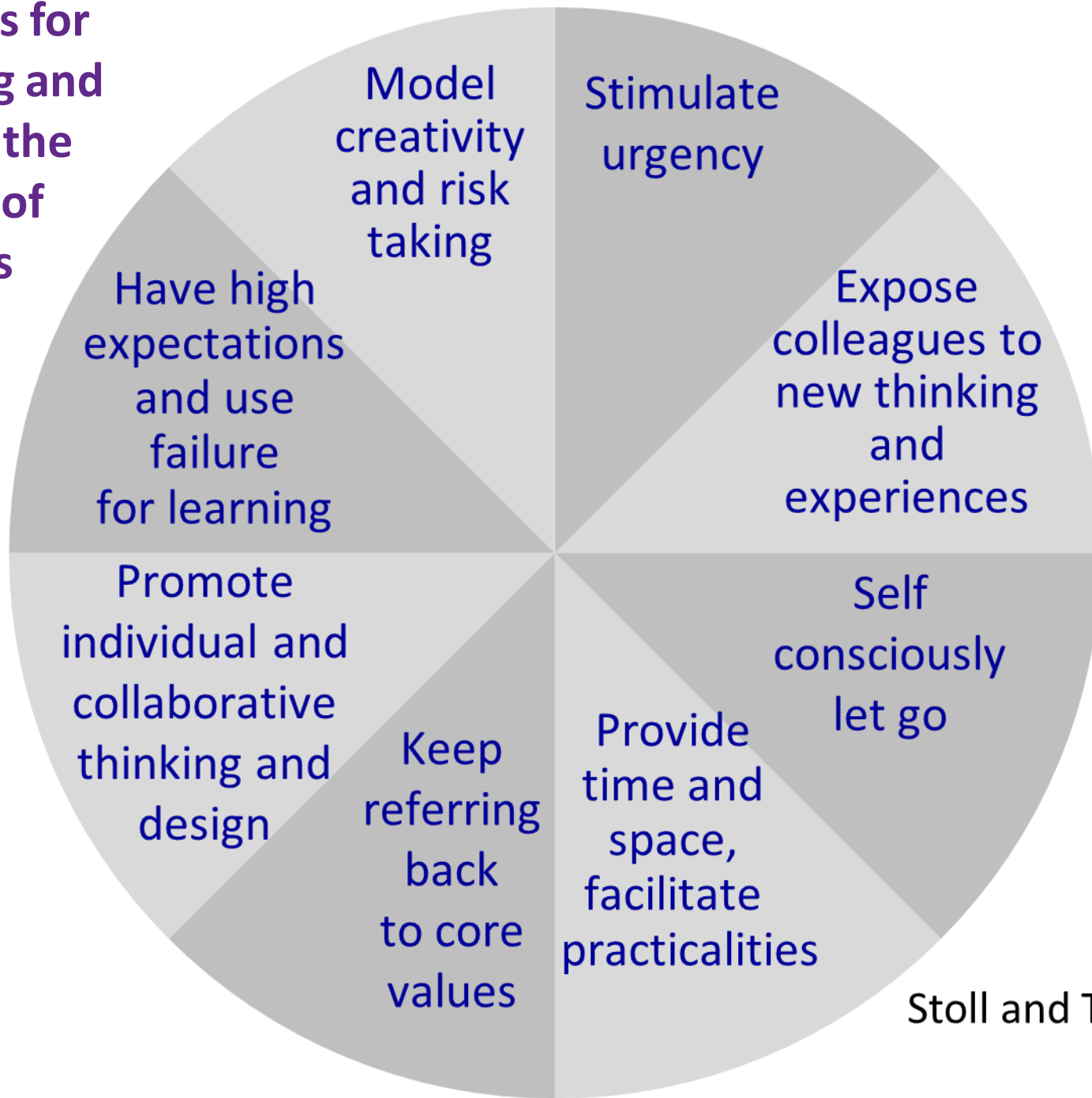
. . . if creativity does not infiltrate the DNA of an organization, it is unlikely to be passed on to the next generation

Gardner (2006)



When do you feel you are at your most creative? What helps you?

Conditions for promoting and nurturing the creativity of colleagues



Stoll and Temperley
(2010)

8. Do you value learning with and from colleagues in other schools?

Host school formulates key question



Host team introduces key question, theory and context to review team



Lesson observations, interviews, looking at schemes of work



Learning conversations between pairs of reviewers



Review team conversation and agreeing feedback



Feedback to host school's headteacher



Host school plans action

**Ealing PLC's
Learning
Review**

9. What support is there for your professional learning communities' development?

Time

Space

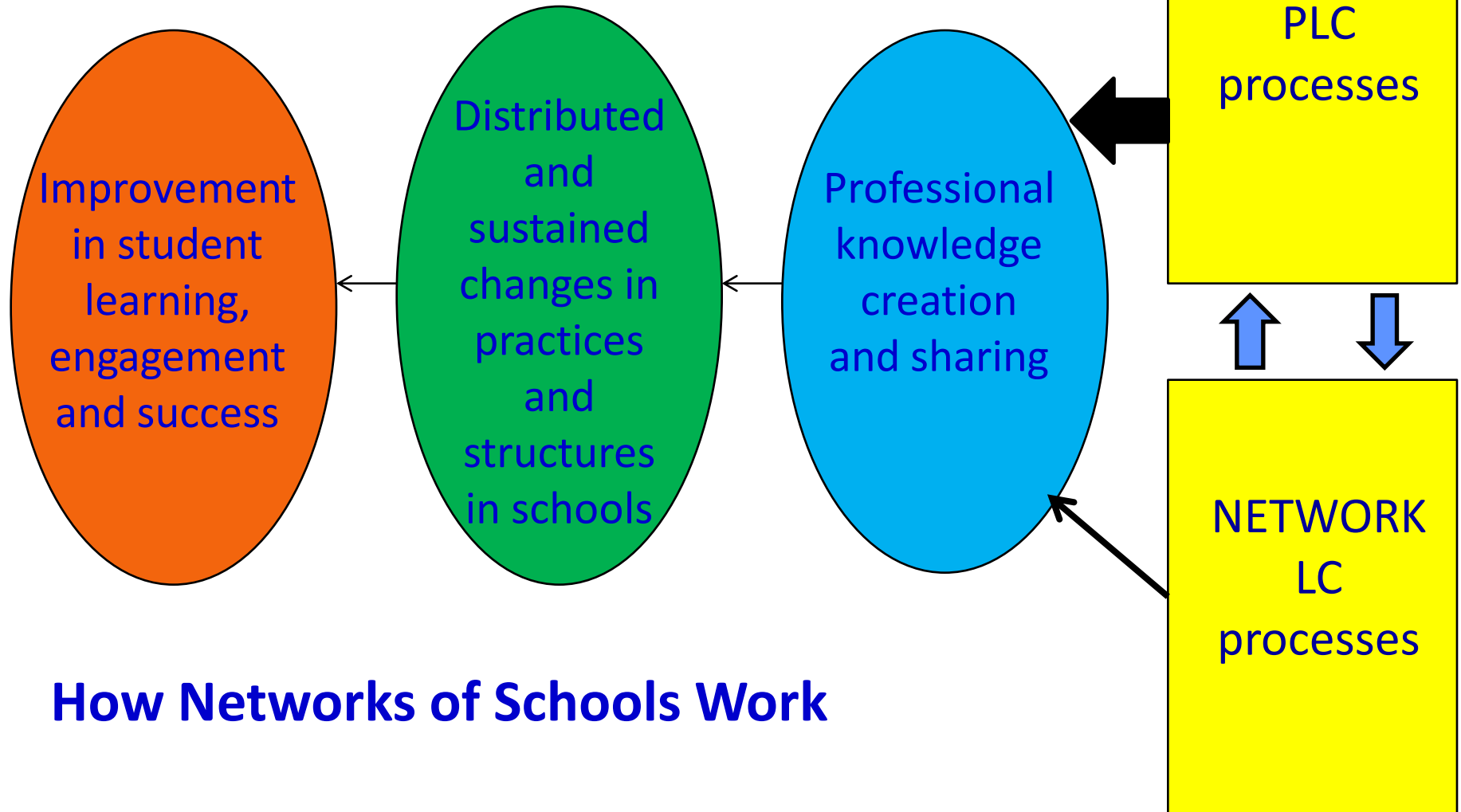
Coordination

Policies eg hiring etc

Links with School Development Plans

Bolam et al (2005)

10. Have you got a theory of action about how your professional learning communities make a difference



How Networks of Schools Work

Earl et al (2006)

If you know something about music or farming, or if you have wisdom and don't share it, then you are selfish. You can't learn the entire sea by heart.

Ali Farka Toure, blues singer
and mayor of Niafunke, Mali